various opinions expressed, but also in acquiring a notion of the forms and etiquette of consultation, a knowledge which cannot but be of great advantage in after-life. Again, on operation days at Guy's some years ago, one always saw two or three at least of the surgeons in the operating-room, assisting, at any rate, by their presence. Students liked to see them; it showed an interest in the hospital, it helped to develop an *esprit de corps* in one's *alma mater*. I remember how glad and proud one used to feel to be able to point out to strangers coming to operations, That is Mr. A., who wrote such-and-such a book, a great man on so-and-so; or, That is Mr. B., a very clever man—splendid fellow; why, he actually removed a kidney! And one felt a glow of pride in thinking what wonderful men *our* hospital possessed! Now, I regret to see that much of this has changed. The surgeon who is operating is generally without a colleague present; one may occasionally drop in apparently accidentally, look over the operator's shoulder, and walk out. Or operations are going on in three or four wards at once, and one never knows where any operation on the list is likely to be performed. This, I urge, is not just to the students, all of whom have a sort of pre-emptive right to an opportunity of seeing every operation, except of course those in which the patient might suffer from his presence, and it is, I am sure, a real grievance. As a matter of fact, the patients here have the advantage always of two opinions, and in very critical or doubtful cases one frequently calls for other advice in the persons of various consultants, whom I have always found most kind and willing with advice, and to many of whom I am much indebted. The proposition of having a consultant staff is more particularly because, as far as the medical officers are concerned, we feel we should not be dependent on the courteous kindness and gratuitous services of eminent medical men. It is only just and right that they should receive some fee, and that the pernicious system of continually enlarging the sphere of unpaid medical services should be avoided. Undoubtedly, there is a great deal of work in these infirmaries, and an increase in the medical staff is desirable. It must be remembered, however, that although we have a great number of cases, many of a serious nature, involving much time and attention, there is a large proportion of trivial ones, trivial at least as far as actual work in treatment goes, although perhaps not so in respect of pathological interest. A large proportion of our cases consists of chronic ulcers, chronic bronchitis, chronic gout, chronic rheumatoid arthritis, forms of paralysis in old people, and bedridden cases from senile decay. All these do not entail a large expenditure of time, so that to say that we have large general hospitals is not exactly correct. Two resident medical officers (and in every infirmary there are now two), not engaged in other practice and devoting their whole time to the duties, can get through a great deal of work.

I am afraid that I have already trespassed too much on your space, and will leave the questions as to the utilisation of these infirmaries for clinical studies, as to their proposed affiliation to the general hospitals, and as to the merits and demerits of the present system, to another letter, should you be willing to accord me space at a future opportunity.

I am Sirs, your obedient servant,

CHARLES GROSS, M.D. Lond., F.R.C.S. Eng.

St. Saviour's Union Infirmary, Walworth, Feb. 15th, 1887.

* * We have received several other letters on the above subject, for which, however, we cannot find room this week.—ED. L.

MEDICAL CORONERSHIPS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Will you allow me to make a few remarks in reference to this subject, as suggested by Dr. Macdonald's letter which appeared in your issue of last week. Having been a candidate for the last appointment, until promised the deputyship by Mr. R. Collier should he have proved successful, he having held that post for ten years, and having on that promise withdrawn my name from the contest, and now being a candidate and having issued my address in your columns, my remarks may be pardoned on the subject. I quite agree with Dr. Macdonald that the medical and not the legal profession are the proper persons to act as coroners. Dr. Macdonald may not be aware of one clause which now stands in the new Coroners Act, and which I believe has passed the second reading, to the effect that the appointment

of coroner should be *only eligible* to barristers or solicitors. Surely this clause has crept in unchallenged. I have seen no allusion to it at all, and therefore draw attention to it. The legal profession are so inundated with appointments that they can well give up their absolute claim to such a post. I quite agree with Dr. Macdonald, that the coroner should, if possible, combine a medical and legal knowledge. Having graduated both in law and medicine, I felt that I had unusual demands for such an appointment. As to the election, I think that it should rest with the Middlesex magistrates, and not with, as has proved to be the case, members of the Odd Fellows, Foresters, and Druids, because they were members of these respective halls, which were in the eastern division of Middlesex; and also with boatmen, who, mooring their boats on the foreshore of the Thames, claimed a privilege to vote. Such farcical nonsense ought surely to be put a stop to, and some Act of Parliament passed to legislate in these matters.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

Feb. 15th, 1887.

L. FORBES WINSLOW, D.C.L. Oxon.

"EPIDEMIC DIARRHŒA."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—We also have been visited in this neighbourhood (St. James's) with an epidemic of diarrhoea—"winter cholera," as the people call it. The attacks come on with great suddenness, often after the evening meal, and, in most of the cases I see, the symptoms become aggravated at night after the patient goes to bed. Severe pain is, as a rule, a prominent symptom, but I have seen more than one case in which, whilst the intestinal catarrh has been profuse, there has been no pain from first to last. I am disposed to attribute the outbreak to atmospheric influences solely.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,

Piccadilly, Feb. 15th, 1887.

T. BROWNE O'CONNOR.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Within the past fortnight several cases of diarrhoea have occurred in my practice in this neighbourhood (Bayswater, W.). Some of the cases have been of extreme severity. The symptoms in all were: pain of a griping character, referred to the region of the umbilicus; frequent diarrhoea of, at first, bilious matter, subsequently becoming of a watery nature; vomiting, thirst, loss of appetite, and general prostration. In one case the symptoms were much aggravated, having, in addition to those above, cramps in the muscles of the abdomen and lower extremities, pulse small, weak, and frequent, almost complete suppression of urine, sunken eyes, and general depression of strength. The attacks lasted from three to six or seven days, and recovered under appropriate treatment. As other districts were affected in a similar manner, perhaps atmospheric influences and water-supply have had a good deal to do with this (at this season of the year) unexpected visitation.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Pembroke-gardens, W., Feb. 15th, 1887. JOHN WHEELER, M.D.

* * On the above subject Dr. Shirliff of Kingston-on-Thames also sends a communication, in which he mentions cases that have occurred in his district exhibiting symptoms similar to those described above, and expresses the opinion that the disease is attributable to cold.—ED. L.

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I have read in THE LANCET of the 12th inst. Professor Rutherford's letter of the 9th inst. I am exceedingly reluctant to enter upon any correspondence in reference to the attack made upon me by Professor Rutherford, more especially after the remarks made by him to his class on the 28th ult. In the course of these he is reported to have said that the time would come when all the facts of the case would be known, and until that time he asked his students to suspend their judgment. I looked upon this statement as an intimation by Professor Rutherford that an inquiry will be made by the Senatus Academicus, or by the University Court, into the whole matter. I can only say that I shall hail such an inquiry with much satisfaction, more especially after what Professor Rutherford

has said and written since his letter of apology was given to me. As regards Professor Rutherford's letter of the 9th inst. to THE LANCET, I think it only necessary for me to send you, as I do, a copy of his letter of apology to me of the 17th ult., which speaks for itself. I shall merely further add that immediately after the incident of the 11th of December last, I put the matter into the hands of my solicitors in order that they might take what proceedings they thought necessary for my complete vindication, and that the conclusion of the correspondence with Professor Rutherford's solicitors was that, after consultation by him with his solicitors and counsel, this letter of apology, written by Professor Rutherford's own hand, was received by me.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,
Edinburgh, Feb. 15th, 1887. HERBERT H. ASHDOWN.

THE PRESENCE OF BLOOD IN THE PERITONEUM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I am amazed that Dr. Hunter should be so ignorant of the facts of the surgery and pathology of the human peritoneum—he a graduate of the University in the city where Keith lives. He seems to have squirted blood of various kinds and from various sources, foreign and domestic, into the peritoneal cavities of dogs and guinea-pigs without ill results. We, on the contrary, cannot even allow a small quantity of a woman's own blood to remain in her abdomen without fear of trouble; so, following Keith, we clear it out by sponging, washing, and the drainage-tube, with every possible care we can exercise. Then we get good results; and Dr. Hunter ventures to say I have not adduced facts in support of these views. I have been doing as much as I can in this direction for the last twelve years. It is in the human subject, and in that only, that we must look for guiding facts for human surgery. We have been led astray too far and too long by experiments on dogs and guinea-pigs.

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,
Birmingham, Feb. 12th, 1887. LAWSON TAIT.

"DR. BRUNTON AND HOMCEOPATHY."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In the preface to the third edition of my Pharmacology I have discussed various criticisms of earlier editions, and have also expressed my opinions regarding homeopathy. As the book will be out in a few days, I think it unnecessary to occupy your columns with extracts from the preface.

I am, Sirs, your obedient servant,
Welbeck-street, W., Feb. 14th, 1887. T. LAUDER BRUNTON.

NORTHERN COUNTIES NOTES.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE NEWCASTLE DISPENSARY.

THE annual meeting of this old institution has been held, and it has presented its 109th annual report, which shows that the number of letter patients showed a decrease of 826 as compared with the previous year. There was, however, an increase of 2722 in the number of casual patients, and this was the largest number of patients of this class admitted in any one year. The medical report showed that 6201 patients had been admitted by letter, while the total number treated had been 22,936. The medical officer (Dr. Beatley) suggested a closer inquiry into the circumstances of patients by donors of letters of recommendation. The increase of casual patients was in a great measure due to the adoption of a charge in these cases at the Newcastle Infirmary, which had caused an unusual influx at the Dispensary. This gave rise to some remarks from the chairman, Mr. R. H. Holmes, who suggested that it would perhaps become necessary to appoint an officer to make inquiries into these cases. The financial statement was satisfactory. A vote of thanks was given to the medical staff, and the chairman especially referred to the loss the institution was about to sustain in the services of Dr. Beatley, who is retiring to commence practice in this city.

THE CHEST HOSPITAL.

The annual meeting of the Chest Hospital has also been held here. The report showed that 596 patients in all had

been treated during the year. An increase over the previous year. This institution is doing as much good as possible within its limited means, but if it is to move with the times and keep pace with the other charities of the city it must throw itself on the public, and at once abolish the "letter" system with which it has been hampered since its birth.

GATESHEAD DISPENSARY.

At the annual meeting of the Gateshead Dispensary just held the medical report showed that the number of patients treated during the year by letter had been 2733; of this number 995 were treated at the hospital and 1738 at their own homes. The total number of patients treated during the year was 13,265, against 12,974 in 1885. The town, it was mentioned, had been wonderfully free from infectious diseases during the past year. The financial statement was satisfactory; there had been an excess of income over expenditure of £166. The chairman, the Rev. Moore Ede, said he believed the time was come when the provident system should be tried side by side with the charitable elements in dispensary management. This brought up Dr. Green, a practitioner in the town, who pointed out that at least one-half of the medical men in Gateshead took patients already on the provident system, a system under which, in the form of a club they paid 3*s.* per week. He (Dr. Green) protested against what was called "the provident system" becoming introduced in connexion with charities, which he contended had their endowments for charity alone. At the suggestion of Dr. Newcombe a committee was appointed in connexion with the dispensary to consider the question of having nurses on its staff in order to attend on patients requiring their aid.

THE MATCH POISONING CRAZE.

Dr. Philipson, in submitting the last annual report of the infirmary, referred to "a remarkable feature in the social history of Newcastle"—namely, the so-called "match-poisoning craze" which has characterised the past year, nine cases of poisoning by phosphorus from a solution of match heads having been admitted into the infirmary, all of which recovered, but after suffering intensely. I may state, in connexion with this "craze," that many cases ended fatally in this city, and in its vicinity the mania had a very rapid "run," so to speak, cases for some time being reported weekly. Happily it now seems to have died out.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, Feb. 14th.

EDINBURGH.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE NEW UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS.

LAST Monday the Chancellor of the Exchequer had an interview with a deputation from the University, consisting of the Principal, the Chairman of the Buildings Committee, and several noblemen and gentlemen, in reference to a proposed grant of £12,000 from Government for the completion of the new medical buildings. Owing to the munificence of a private donor, the University has already at its disposal a sum of money considered adequate to complete the graduation hall and the tower, but as yet no provision has been made for the purchase of the site on which these parts of the original plan of the building are to be erected. In addressing Mr. Goschen, Sir W. Muir and Sir W. Turner laid stress upon the fact that but for lack of means to purchase the site the buildings themselves would already be in course of erection, and urged the desirableness of a Government grant to aid in the completion of works of such national importance. It is feared that the reply of the right honourable gentleman does not indicate any immediate intention on the part of the Treasury to accede to this request, for, while expressing his regard for the interests of the University, Mr. Goschen hinted that there were difficulties of a serious nature in the way of making the grant, chiefly in regard to other claims likely to be strongly represented should the present action give a precedent for such demands. At the same time, he promised that the subject should receive his best consideration; and with this ray of consolation the deputation withdrew. There seems to be a possibility that a much smaller grant than that asked for may be given, on the condition that the remainder of the sum required shall be forthcoming from other sources.